

## Highlighting Your Soft Skills

When you're applying for a new job, highlight your soft skills as well as your job-specific ones. First, make a list of the soft skills you have that are relevant to the job you want. Compare your list of soft skills with the job listing.

Include some of these soft skills in your résumé. You can add them to a skills section. You can also mention these soft skills in your cover letter. Pick one or two soft skills you have that appear to be the most important for the job you'd like. In your cover letter, provide evidence that shows you have those particular skills.

Finally, you can highlight these soft skills in your interviews. You can demonstrate your soft skills during the interview by being friendly and approachable. If you pay close attention while the interviewer is talking, you will show your listening skills.

*Adapted from [www.thebalancecareers.com/what-are-soft-skills](http://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-are-soft-skills)*



## How to Get Soft Skills

Unlike hard skills that are learned, soft skills are similar to emotions or insights that allow people to "read" others. These are much harder to learn, at least in a traditional classroom. They are also much harder to measure and evaluate.

That said, some job skills programs do cover soft skills. They may discuss soft skills so job seekers know what they are and the importance of highlighting them on their résumé.

If you've been working for a while, chances are you've already developed some soft skills. For example, if you've helped unhappy customers in a store find a resolution, you've used conflict resolution and problem-solving skills. If you're new to work, think of other activities you've done, either through school or volunteer groups. Chances are you've had to communicate, adapt to changes, and solve problems.

You can also reflect on soft skills you need to develop. For example, instead of just discussing problems with your classmates and teachers, suggest solutions to those problems.



Read the statements and mark the correct answer.

- a. Soft skills are different from hard skills because the first ones
- are easier to learn at school
  - are measured and evaluated easily
  - are similar to emotions or personality traits
- b. If someone has worked in a store helping clients, which soft skills might she/he has developed?
- problem solving
  - adapting
  - volunteer groups
- c. How can you develop some soft skills at school?
- fighting with classmates
  - suggesting solutions to problems
  - discussing with your teachers
- d. How can you demonstrate your soft skills in a job interview? By
- listening carefully to the interviewer
  - presenting a cover letter
  - being distant and unfriendly

### Post reading

Read the quote. Write ideas about the meaning of this quote. Use these questions as a guide: how important is the ability to communicate well with others? How can this ability help you at this school year? How can you communicate better with others?



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**Felipe:** Hey Susana what are you so concentrated on reading?

**Susana:** Oh, hi Felipe. I came across an article about college problems while I was surfing the net. I thought it could be useful since next year, we *will be starting* college or university.

**Felipe:** Sounds interesting to me! I am kind of nervous about college next year. I think we *will be doing* a lot of assignments and taking hard tests all year round.

**Susana:** I know how you feel. For me, it is easy to organize my time. But it says here that one of the main problems for college students has to do with time management. Apparently they don't use their time well and procrastinate most of the time.

**Felipe:** Yeah I can tell you about that. I usually wait until the last moment to do my homework and that gives me a lot of stress. Sometimes I feel so overwhelmed with all the assignments that I can't sleep for days.

**Susana:** Really? You should do something to be more organized. Otherwise, your life next year in college will be terrible, especially because you *will be working* part time in the public library.

**Felipe:** Yes, I suppose so. Our counselor is helping me with this problem; by the way, I have an appointment with her right now. I must go, see you later.

**Susana:** Bye, take care.

According to the conversation mark true or false for the following statements.

- |                                                                     |          |          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| a. Susana is reading an article about college students' problems.   | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| b. Susana always procrastinates her school work.                    | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| c. Felipe is worried about next year.                               | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| d. Felipe is usually relaxed, but he can't sleep well.              | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| e. A counselor is helping Felipe with his time management problems. | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |

### Post Reading

You are chatting with a friend on Facebook. Tell him/her about your future plans for the next year after graduating from high school. Reflect on the following questions: will you be working or studying? Which possible problems will you be facing in college/university or in your job? Which could be some possible solutions to those problems? Use the future continuous tense.

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